

# IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPT (Western Division)

ROBERT EASTMAN,

Plaintiff,

v.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY SILICA COMPANY,

Defendant,

HARTFORD FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP,

Garnishee-Defendant.

Civil Action No. 5:10CV 175 DCB-JMP NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Garnishee-Defendant, Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. ("Hartford"), pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1441(a) and 1332, hereby files this Notice of Removal of this action from the Circuit Court of Warren County, in the State of Mississippi, to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, and states as follows:

- 1. On or about October 1, 2010, Plaintiff Robert Eastman ("Eastman") filed a Suggestion for Writ of Garnishment (the "Suggestion for Writ") and an accompanying Writ of Garnishment (the "Writ") in the Circuit Court of Warren County in the State of Mississippi, where the action is currently pending under Civil Action No. 07,0132-CI (the "Garnishment Action").
- 2. Hartford's resident agent in Connecticut, Corporation Service Company, was served with copies of the Writ and the Suggestion for Writ on October 12, 2010.

- 3. The Writ states that final judgment in the underlying action, *Eastman v. Mississippi Valley Silica Co.* (the "Underlying Action"), was entered in favor of Eastman against the Mississippi Valley Silica Company ("MVS") in the Circuit Court of Warren County in the amount of One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus post judgment interest accruing annually at the rate of eight (8) percent beginning on November 9, 2009 as well as court costs. (Writ at 1).
- 4. Eastman alleges that Hartford issued an insurance policy to MVS and that Hartford is indebted to MVS and/or possesses effects of MVS. (Suggestion for Writ at 1).
- 5. Eastman seeks to compel Hartford to answer two questions, relating to the extent, if any, of Hartford's alleged indebtedness to MVS and Hartford's knowledge of other parties indebted to MVS. (Writ at 2).
- 6. Eastman demands that Hartford's alleged indebtedness to MVS be bound by and subject to the lien of the judgment in full satisfaction of the Underlying Action judgment. (Suggestion for Writ at 1). Eastman further demands judgment against Hartford in the sum of One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus post judgment interest and court costs. (Suggestion for Writ at 2).
- 7. Hartford received no pleadings prior to being served with the copies of the Writ and Suggestion for Writ on October 12, 2010.
- 8. The time in which Hartford must answer or otherwise respond to these pleadings has not elapsed, and Hartford has not yet filed an answer or other pleading in the Garnishment Action.

- 9. This Notice is filed within thirty days after Hartford's receipt of the initial pleadings in the Garnishment Action as required by 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
- 10. This Court has original jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332, and the action may be removed to this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441(a). As set forth below, there is complete diversity of citizenship, and the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.
- 11. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff Eastman is a citizen of the state of Mississippi.
- 12. Garnishee-Defendant Hartford is a Delaware insurance company with its principal place of business being Connecticut.
- 13. Upon information and belief, Defendant MVS is an inactive Delaware company, with its former principal place of business being Louisiana. Therefore, complete diversity exists between the parties as required by 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
- 14. A garnishment action is separate from the underlying action, and it is therefore, independently subject to removal. *See Freeman v. Walley*, 276 F. Supp. 2d 597, 598-99 (S.D. Miss. 2003) (ruling that "a garnishment proceeding is a 'civil action' within the meaning of § 1441(a),' and is therefore subject to removal, and that a garnishment action 'exists

Further, for diversity purposes, MVS should be disregarded as a nominal party to the Garnishment Action. In garnishment actions, the defendant named in the underlying action is disregarded and does not affect the court's diversity considerations. See Moore v. Sentry Ins. Co., 399 F. Supp. 929, 931 (S.D. Miss. 1975) (holding that a defendant in the underlying state court action is not a proper party to garnishment proceedings and does not destroy diversity). Moreover, MVS should be considered a nominal party because no controversy or cause of action against MVS is presented in Eastman's Writ or Suggestion for Writ, and final judgment has already been entered against MVS in the separate Underlying Action. See Butler v. Polk, 592 F.2d 1293, 1295 (5th Cir. 1979) ("[G]arnishment actions against third-parties are generally construed as independent suits, at least in relation to the primary action."); (Writ at 1).

separate and apart from the primary action that established the judgment debt which provides the foundation for the right of action against the garnishee") (quoting *Johnson v. Great Am. Ins. Co.*, 213 F. Supp. 2d 657, 660-61 (S.D. Miss. 2001)); *see also Berry v. McLemore*, 795 F.2d 452, 455 (5th Cir. 1986) (holding that garnishment actions against third parties are "independent actions from the primary action which established the judgment debt"); *Butler*, 592 F.2d at 1295-96. Eastman's Underlying Action against MVS, in which final judgment has already been entered, is separate from the presently pending Garnishment Action.

- § 1332(c) for purposes of determining an insurer's citizenship in diversity cases, and for this reason, a garnishee-insurer retains its own citizenship and is not deemed to be a citizen of the state where the insured is a citizen. *See Mabins v. ALFA Ins, Co.*, No. 2:10cv130-KS-MTP, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 70492, at \*1 (S.D. Miss. June 23, 2010) (denying motion to remand on grounds that "an insurance company retains its own citizenship in a garnishment action because a writ of garnishment is not a direct action, as contemplated by 28 U.S.C. § 1332(c)(1)"); *see also Estate of Davis v. Magnolia Healthcare, Inc.*, No. 4:05cv122-P-B, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 43129 (N.D. Miss. June 23, 2006) (holding that insurer retains citizenship in garnishment action); *Roberts v. Magnolia Healthcare, Inc.* No. 4:05cv149-P-B, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 43081 (N.D. Miss. June 23, 2006) (same). Thus, complete diversity exists in the instant Garnishment Action between Plaintiff Eastman and Garnishee-Defendant Hartford.
- 16. The matter in controversy in the present action exceeds the sum of \$75,000, the minimum jurisdictional limit of this Court in a diversity case. *See* (Writ at 1, Suggestion for Writ at 2).

- 17. Written notice hereof is being provided to the parties and a copy of the Notice of Removal will be filed with the Circuit Court of Warren County in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1446(d).
- 18. True and legible copies of all process, pleadings, papers, and orders served upon Hartford in the Garnishment Action to date are attached hereto as Exhibits 1-4, in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a).

WHEREFORE, Garnishee-Defendant Hartford requests that this action be removed from the Circuit Court of Warren County, in the State of Mississippi, to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441(a) and that no further proceedings be had in the Garnishment Action.

Respectfully submitted,

George Abdo, MS Bar No. 9782 Daniel Coker Horton & Bell, PA

4400 Old Canton Road, Suite 400

Post Office Box 1084

Jackson, MS 39215-1084

Telephone: (601) 969-7607 Facsimile: (601) 969-1116

Email: gabdo@danielcoker.com

Counsel for Garnishee-Defendant Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.

Date: November 5, 2010

#### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI (Western Division)

ROBERT EASTMAN,	
Plaintiff,	
v.	
MISSISSIPPI VALLEY SILICA COMPANY,	Civil Action No.
Defendant,	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
HARTFORD FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP, INC.,	
Garnishee-Defendant.	

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 5th day of November, 2010, a copy of the foregoing Notice of Removal and accompanying letter to the Clerk of the Court were served, via first class mail to:

John T. Givens Timothy W. Porter Patrick C. Malouf Porter & Malouf, P.A. Post Office Box 12768 Jackson, MS 39236-2768

Counsel for Plaintiff

and

R. Allen Smith, Jr. The Smith Law Firm, P.L.L.C. 681 Towne Center Blvd, Suite B Ridgeland, MS 39157 Counsel for Plaintiff

and

Robert Eastman

Plaintiff

In Care Of: John T. Givens Timothy W. Porter Patrick C. Malouf Porter & Malouf, P.A. Post Office Box 12768 Jackson, MS 39236-2768

R. Allen Smith, Jr. The Smith Law Firm, P.L.L.C. 681 Towne Center Blvd, Suite B Ridgeland, MS 39157

and

Mississippi Valley Silica Company

Defendant

In Care Of: John Cosmich Cosmich Simmons & Brown, P.L.L.C. Post Office Box 22626 Jackson, MS 39225-2626

> George Abdo, MS Bar No. 9782 Daniel Coker Horton & Bell, PA 4400 Old Canton Road, Suite 400 Post Office Box 1084

Jackson, MS 39215-1084 Telephone: (601) 969-7607 Facsimile: (601) 969-1116 Email: gabdo@danielcoker.com

Counsel for Garnishee-Defendant Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.

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JS 44 (Rev. 11/04)

#### CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

1. (a) PLAINTIFFS

DEFENDANTS

Robert Eastman

1. (a) PLAINTIFFS		DEFENDANTS		
Robert Eastman		Hortford Financial	Sarvices Group, Inc.	
•	F First Listed Plaintiff Warren (CEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)  ddress, and Telephone Number)	County of Residence of	j.	State of Connecticut  LY LY LE THE LOCATION OF THE  O 5 2010  NOBLIN, CLEPIC  DESCRIPTION  NOBLIN, CLEPIC  DESCRIPTION  DESCRIPTION  NOBLIN, CLEPIC  DESCRIPTION  DESCRIPTION  NOBLIN, CLEPIC  DESCRIPTION  NOBLIN, CLEPIC  DESCRIPTION  DESCRIPTION
	FION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)	111. CITIZENSHIP OF PRIN	CIPAL PARTIES (Place a	in "X" in One Box for Plaintiff
1 U.S, Government Plaintiff	☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)		<ul> <li>IF DEF</li> <li>1 □ 1 Incorporated or Print</li> <li>of Business In This</li> </ul>	
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	■ 4 Diversity  (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	of Business In A	Another State
		Citizen or Subject of a  Foreign Country	3	□ 6 <b>□</b> 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT (PI	ace an "x" in One Box Only)  TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
■ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment ⊕ Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise ■ REAL PROPERTY □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Forcelosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 240 Torts to Land □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 365 Personal Injury Med. Malpractice 365 Personal Injury Med. Malpractice 365 Personal Injury Med. Malpractice 365 Machine Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability 340 Marine PERSONAL PROPER 370 Other Fraud Liability 371 Truth in Lending 371 Truth in Lending 375 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 385 Property Damage Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury CIVIL RIGHTS PRISONER PETITIO 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Aecommodations 444 Welfare 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 440 Other Civil Rights	G20 Other Food & Drug	□ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 □ 423 With/trawal 28 USC 157  PROPERTY RIGHTS □ 820 Copyrights □ 840 Trademark  SOCIAL SECURITY □ 861 HIA (1395ff) □ 862 Black Lung (923) □ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) □ 864 SSID Title XVI □ 865 RSI (405(g)) ■ FEDERAL TAX SUITS □ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) □ 871 IRS-Third Party 26 USC 7609	□ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and □ Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 810 Selective Service □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ □ Exchange □ 875 Customer Challenge □ 12 USC 3410 □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 892 Economic Stabilization Act □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 894 Energy Allocation Act □ 895 Freedom of Information □ Act □ 900 Appeal of Fce Determination Under Equal Access to Justice □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
□ I Original ■ 2R	State Court Appellate Court  Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you a 28 U.S.C. 1332 (diversity of citizen		fy) Litigation	
VII. REQUESTED IN	blief description of eadse.	1 860 00	0.00CHECK YES only	if demanded in complaint:
COMPLAINT: VIII. RELATED CAS	UNDER F.R.C.P. 23  E(S) (See instructions):		JURY DEMAND:	Yes 🔀 No
IF ANY	JUDGE		DOCKET NUMBER	
November 5, 2010	SIGNATURE OF A	TTORNEY OF RECORD	Wo	
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY				
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#34643006379



#### **Notice of Service of Process**

WAS / ALL Transmittal Number: 8088387 Date Processed: 10/12/2010

**Primary Contact:** 

Mr. Michael Johnson Law Department

The Hartford One Hartford Plaza Law Department Hartford, CT 06105

Entity:

The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.

Entity ID Number 2341014

**Entity Served:** 

Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.

Title of Action:

Robert Eastman vs. Mississippi Valley Silica Company

Document(s) Type:

Garnishment/Withholding

Nature of Action:

Garnishment/Withholding

Court:

Warren County Circuit Court, Mississippi

Case Number:

07,1032-CI

Jurisdiction Served:

Connecticut

Date Served on CSC:

10/12/2010

Answer or Appearance Due:

30 Days

**Originally Served On:** 

CSC

How Served:

Certified Mail

Sender Information:

John T. Givens 601-957-1173

Information contained on this transmittal form is for record keeping, notification and forwarding the attached document(s). It does not constitute a legal opinion. The recipient is responsible for interpreting the documents and taking appropriate action.

To avoid potential delay, please do not send your response to CSC

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### IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF WARREN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

ROBERT EASTMAN

**PLAINTIFF** 

VS.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 07,0132-CI

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY SILICA COMPANY

DEFENDANT

HARTFORD FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP, INC.

**GARNISHEE-DEFENDANT** 

#### WRIT OF GARNISHMENT

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI COUNTY OF WARREN

TO: ANY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SERVE PROCESS (PROCESS SERVER)

WHEREAS, Robert Eastman, recovered a Final Judgment by Order in the Circuit Court of Warren County, on the 13th day of April, 2010, for the sum of One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus accrued post judgment interest at the rate of eight (8) percent annum from and after the date of November 9, 2009 until paid in full and court costs against Defendant, Mississippi Valley Silica Company. The Judgment has not been satisfied, and said Plaintiff having made proper suggestion for writ of garnishment against Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., Garnishee-Defendant, whose agent for service of process is:

#### CORPORATION SERVICE COMPANY

50 Weston Street Hartford, Connecticut 06120-1537

We, therefore, command you to summon said Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., Garnishee, pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 11-35-27 to answer within thirty (30) days of the date of delivery of this Writ of Garnishment under oath in writing the following questions and to deliver or mail within said time a copy of their answer to Porter & Malouf, P.A., P.O. Box 12768, Jackson, MS 39236, attorneys for Plaintiff. The original Garnishee's Answer must be

filed with the Clerk of this Court. FAILURE TO ANSWER, AS REQUIRED, WILL RESULT IN JUDGMENT AGAINST GARNISHEE IN THE AMOUNT OF THE GARNISHMENT.

FIRST: Whether you or either of you be indebted to any of the Defendants, individually or jointly, or were so indebted at the time of the service of the writ on you or either of you, or have at any time since been so indebted; and if so indebted, at what sum, whether due or not, and when due or to become due and how the debt is evidenced and what interest it bears. Said indebtedness is to include, but not be limited to, all insurance policies that were in full force.

SECOND: Whether you know or believe any person is indebted to the Defendant, individually or jointly, or either or them; and if so, whom, and what amount and where he resides.

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WITHHOLD One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus accrued post judgment interest at the rate of eight (8) percent annum from and after the date of November 9, 2009 and court costs until paid in full.

WITNESS MY SIGNATURE this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of October, 2010.

SHELLEY ASHLEE PALMERTREE CIRCUIT CLERK OF WARREN COUNTY

By: May Mayle

, D.C

Prepared and Submitted by:

John T. Givens, MSB No. 101561 PORTER & MALOUF, P.A. Post Office Box 12768 Jackson, Mississippi 39236-2768 Telephone: (601) 957-1173 Facsimile: (601) 957-7366

**RECEIVED BY** 

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**PORTER & MALOUF** 

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF WARREN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

**ROBERT EASTMAN** 

**PLAINTIFF** 

VS.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 07,0132-CI

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY SILICA COMPANY

DEFENDANT

HARTFORD FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP, INC.

**GARNISHEE-DEFENDANT** 

#### SUGGESTION FOR WRIT OF GARNISHMENT

The undersigned attorney for the Plaintiff, Robert Eastman, in the above-styled cause respectfully shows that on or about April 13, 2010, a Final Order was entered in favor of the Plaintiffs against the Defendant Mississippi Valley Silica Company, for the sum of One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus accrued post judgment interest at the rate of eight (8) percent annum from and after the date of November 9, 2009 until paid in full and court costs; that an execution may be issued upon said judgment; and that Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. Garnishee-Defendant herein had issued an insurance policy to Mississippi Valley Silica Company that was in full force, and whose agent for service of process Corporation Service Company, 50 Weston Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06120-1537. Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. is indebted to the Defendant Mississippi Valley Silica Company and/or possesses effects of the Defendant.

Plaintiffs demand that any indebtedness of the Garnishee-Defendant to the Defendant, at the time of service of process therefore, be bound by and subject to the lien of the judgment including accrued post judgment interest and court costs and further that it be appropriated to the satisfaction of the judgment with payments to be applied to accrued interest first then to principal until the entire principal balance is paid.

Further, Plaintiffs demand judgment against the Garnishee-Defendant, Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., in the sum of One Million Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand dollars (\$1,960,000.00) plus accrued post judgment interest to date and costs of court.

DATED, this the 30th day of September, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Bv:

John T. Givens, Attorney for Plaintif

#### Of Counsel:

Timothy W. Porter, MSB No. 9687 Patrick C. Malouf, MSB No. 9702 John T. Givens, MSB No. 101561 PORTER & MALOUF, P.A. Post Office Box 12768 Jackson, Mississippi 39236-2768 Telephone: (601) 957-1173 Facsimile: (601) 957-7366

R. Allen Smith, Jr., MSB No. 99984 THE SMITH LAW FIRM, P.L.L.C. 681 Towne Center Boulevard, Suite B Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157

Telephone: (601) 952-1422 Facsimile: (601) 952-1426

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OCT 0 4 7010

PORTER & MALOUF

PORTER & MALOUF, P.A. ATTORNEYS AT LAW

P. O. Box 12768 Jackson, Mississippi 39236



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ZIP 39157 041L11216615

Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. Hartford, Connecticut 07120-1537 c/o Corporation Service Company 50 Weston Street

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